

EPA's BEACH Report:

Northern Mariana Islands 2011 Swimming Season

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Introduction

The Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act of 2000 authorizes EPA to provide grants to coastal and Great Lakes states, territories, and eligible tribes to monitor their coastal beaches for bacteria that indicate the possible presence of disease-causing pathogens and to notify the public when there is a potential risk to public health. The BEACH Act requires that recipients of those grants report their coastal beach monitoring and notification data to EPA. This fact sheet highlights the data submitted to EPA by the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for the 2011 swimming season.

2011 Swimming Season Monitoring and Notification Actions

Northern Mariana Islands monitored 69 coastal beaches on three islands during the 2011 swimming season (Figure 1 and Table 1). When monitoring results at swimming beaches show that levels of specific indicator bacteria in the water exceed applicable water quality standards, Northern Mariana Islands officials issue a beach advisory, warning people of possible risks of swimming for the next 48 hours.

How many beaches had notification actions?

In 2011, all of the 69 coastal beaches that Northern Mariana Islands monitored had at least one notification action. This is the same as the previous 2 years (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Monitored Northern Mariana Islands.

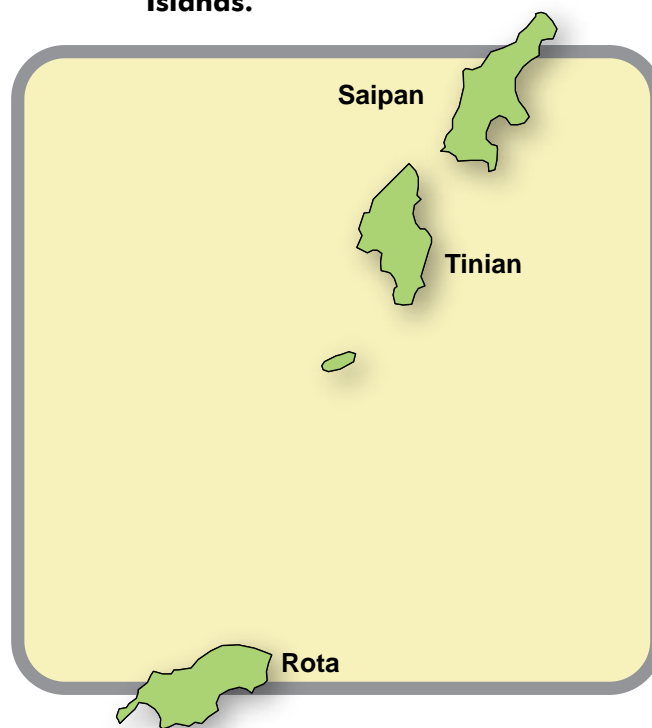


Table 1. Number of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches for 2011.

Island	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
ROTA	11	11	0
SAIPAN	53	53	0
TINIAN	5	5	0
TOTALS	69	69	0

Figure 2: Percent of beaches with one or more notification actions

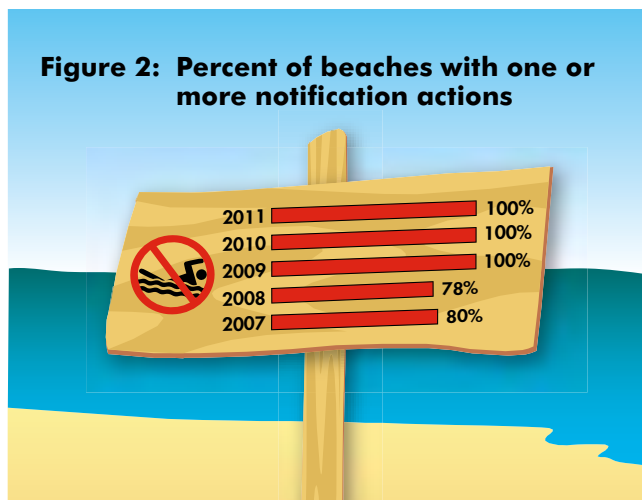
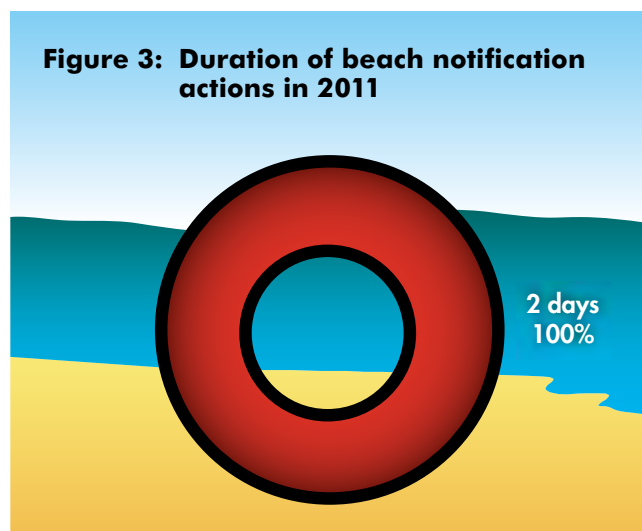


Figure 3: Duration of beach notification actions in 2011



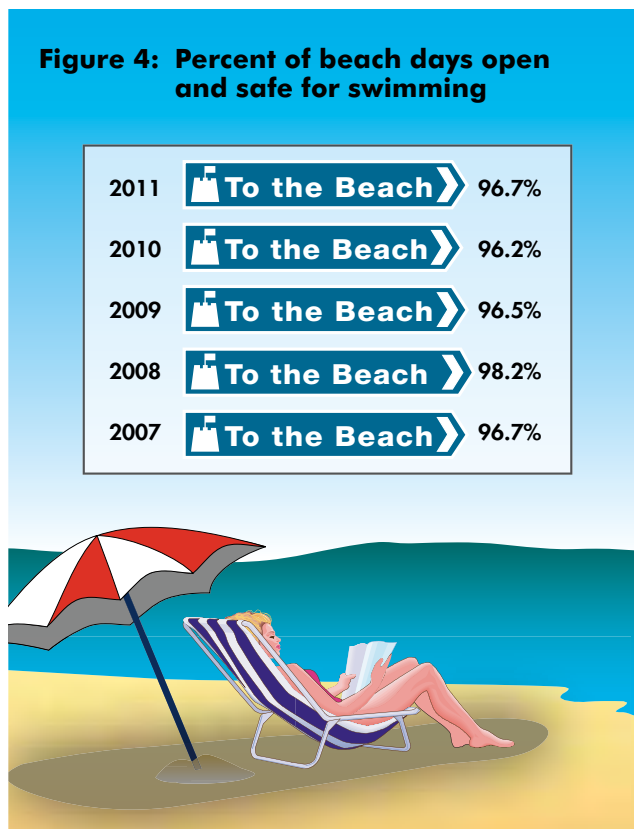
How many notification actions were issued and how long did they last?

Northern Mariana Islands issued 410 2-day notification actions during the 2011 swimming season (Figure 3). The Division of Environmental Quality is working to reduce the number of actions at recreational beaches by supporting programs to repair and improve sewage collection systems and managing cattle grazing in areas that impact beaches.

What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

EPA calculates the total available beach days and the number of beach days with notification actions to better track trends over time. Total available beach days are determined by multiplying the

Figure 4: Percent of beach days open and safe for swimming



length of the beach season by the number of beaches in the state. For 2011 EPA calculated that 25,185 beach days were associated with the swimming seasons of the 69 monitored Northern Mariana Islands beaches. Northern Mariana Islands reported notification actions on 820 days, meaning that beaches were open and safe for swimming approximately 97 percent of the time. This continues the trend of consistently high percentages of open beach days (Figure 4).

For More Information

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For general information about beaches visit:
<http://water.epa.gov/type/oceb/beaches/>.

For information about a specific beach visit:
<http://watersgeo.epa.gov/beacon2/>.